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Mrs J Rankin
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rankin

Ofsted 2012–13 subject survey inspection programme: English

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 23 April 2012 to look at work in English.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and pupils; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of parts of three lessons.

The overall effectiveness of English is satisfactory.

Achievement in English

Achievement in English is satisfactory.

- Pupils' attainment varies from year to year because of the small numbers in each year group. In 2011, Year 2 pupils' attainment was broadly average with no significant difference between reading and writing. The attainment of Year 6 pupils was average in reading but below average in writing. Pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are on track to improve on these results in writing because of the prompt action taken by the school this year.
- Pupils make generally satisfactory progress. In the past, this has been stronger in reading than in writing, but current pupils' writing has improved because of clear objectives for learning and regular practice. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at

least satisfactory progress because they receive effective support in class and well-focused interventions individually or in small groups.

- Pupils read aloud with confidence and accuracy. They correct themselves when they recognise that what they have read does not make sense. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 read their presentations on different sports clearly to their class. Key Stage 1 pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to read unfamiliar words.
- In lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress. They concentrate well, are keen to answer teachers' questions and contribute to discussions. They enjoy practical tasks. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used drama well to develop dialogue for a writing task. Pupils settle to work promptly and sensibly.

Quality of teaching in English

The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory.

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons with clear objectives. They use a wide range of activities to engage pupils' interest. However, teachers do not always match work closely enough to pupils' differing abilities. As a result, pupils too often all do broadly the same task. Although teachers use questions well to check pupils' understanding, they do not always follow these up well enough to encourage pupils to extend their ideas or develop explanations.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide comments which recognise what they have achieved. However, the quality of targets to improve work is variable between classes. Although pupils understand the main features to include in their writing, they are not always clear exactly what they need to do next to improve it. In addition, teachers do not routinely provide pupils with time to respond to any comments and to correct their work.

Quality of the curriculum in English

The quality of the curriculum in English is satisfactory.

- The curriculum is organised well to cater for mixed-age classes. It provides a broad range of experiences, including regular access to poetry and drama. Pupils use computers regularly, as those in Years 3 and 4 did in researching different sports for their presentations.
- The school has taken specific action to improve pupils' writing. Pupils enjoy the freedom to use their imagination involved in the 'Big Write' activities. Although these are relatively infrequent, they do offer an opportunity to engage pupils' interest and motivation. Similarly, opportunities to link writing tasks to work in other subjects are successful but not yet planned rigorously enough.
- The school offers a good range of enrichment activities which includes poetry and handwriting competitions, writing for real audiences and visits from a storyteller.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in English

The effectiveness of leadership and management in English is satisfactory.

- You set a clear vision for English based strongly on raising achievement. Your detailed evaluation of pupils' achievement informs relevant action plans. The strategies developed to improve pupils' writing, although in their early stages, are beginning to show impact in pupils' progress.
- You set clear expectations, for example in raising the standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation. However, there is still variation in practice across classes. Teachers work well together, sharing planning, marking and moderating pupils' work, and developing new approaches to learning.
- You meet regularly with teachers to discuss pupils' progress and devise strategies to help who are underachieving. You know the school's strengths and identify accurately its areas for improvement.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the quality of pupils' writing further by:
 - providing regular activities which encourage pupils to be creative and develop their own ideas
 - ensuring that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work
- using assessment approaches effectively to raise achievement by ensuring that all teachers:
 - match work closely to pupils' differing abilities
 - use a full range of questions to develop pupils' thinking
 - give pupils time to respond to the comments on their work and to apply teachers' advice in corrections.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop English in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg
Her Majesty's Inspector